



Census Fact Sheet for Persons with Disabilities



WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT THE CENSUS?

One in five Massachusetts residents has a disability and continues to be undercounted in the U.S. Census. Conducted every 10 years, the census is much more than a population count. Census data are used to reapportion congressional seats to states, and directly affect how more than \$400 billion per year in federal funding is distributed to state, local and tribal governments. People with disabilities have a major stake in a complete Census count. An accurate count impacts several important programs and services, such as MassHealth, Medicare, SSI, programs funded by the Rehabilitation Act, housing, Vocational Rehabilitation, accessible transit, and special education for children ages 3 through 5.

WILL THERE BE A QUESTION ABOUT DISABILITY ON THE CENSUS THIS YEAR?

No. The 2000 census had a short form and a long form. The long form was mailed to one in six households and contained questions about disability. This year, all households will receive the short form, which will consist of ten questions that will take approximately ten minutes to answer. Information about disability will be collected separately through the American Community Survey (ACS), which is mailed out randomly to 250,000 households per month.

HOW DO I KNOW THIS INFORMATION WON'T BECOME PUBLIC, EXPOSING ME TO DISCRIMINATION?

The Census Bureau must ensure absolute confidentiality of its records in order to carry out its monumental task every 10 years. The census questionnaire does not ask for your Social Security number. All Census employees, including part-time and temporary employees, are required to take an oath to protect the identity of individuals and to ensure the privacy of information that is collected. Violators may be fined up to \$250,000, face up to five years in prison, or both. Information collected on the census questionnaire is not shared with other agencies, such as the IRS, Social Security, or the Department of Motor Vehicles. Individual census records are kept confidential for more than 70 years.

WHAT TYPE OF ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE TO ME AS I FILL OUT THE FORM?

The Telephone Questionnaire Assistance Center (1-866-872-6868) is staffed by a census employee who can answer questions, send questionnaire guides in Braille and large print, or take your information by telephone. For Spanish: 1-866-928-2010. For the hearing-impaired: 1-866-783-2010. Hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. (local time) 7 days a week.

For more information visit the Census at www.2010.census.gov or the Disability Policy Consortium at www.dpcma.org